

REMARKS

This application has been reviewed in light of the Office Action dated July 9, 2007. Claims 1, 3, 5, and 9-11, 13, 15 and 19-22 are presented for examination, of which Claims 1, 11, 21 and 22 are in independent form. Claim 5 has been amended as to matters of form; no change in scope is intended or believed effected by at least this change. Claims 1, 11, 21 and 22 have been amended to define still more clearly what Applicants regard as their invention. Favorable reconsideration is requested.

As stated in the May 1, 2007 Amendment, a Claim To Priority and a certified copy of the priority document for this application were filed on August 7, 2003, as evidenced by the copy of the PAIR printout for this case, a copy of which was attached to the May 7, 2007 Amendment. Applicant again respectfully requests acknowledgment of the claim for foreign priority and the receipt of the certified copy.

Claims 1, 3, 5, 9-11, 13, 15 and 19-22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Application Publication No. 2003/0093521 (Schlonski et al.) in view of U.S. Application Publication No. 2001/0029474 (Yada).

Applicant submits that the claims are patentable over the cited references for the reasons set forth in the May 1, 2007 Amendment.

In addition, as shown above, Applicant has amended independent Claims 1, 11, 21 and 22 in terms that more clearly define what he regards as his invention. Applicant submits that these amended independent claims, together with the remaining claims dependent thereon, are patentably distinct from the cited prior art for at least the following reasons.

Claim 1 is directed to an information processing apparatus that manages a

predetermined device capable of performing communication over a network. The apparatus includes: (1) a holding unit configured to hold corresponding information corresponding to first device identification information and second device identification information; (2) an obtaining unit configured to obtain accounting information based on an image forming operation from the predetermined device; (3) a determination unit configured to compare a combination of the first device identification information and the second device identification information which are obtained from the predetermined device with the corresponding information held by the holding unit, and determine whether or not at least one of the first device identification information and the second device identification information is being managed; (3) a communication controlling unit configured to issue a notification to an external apparatus when the determination unit determines that one of the first device identification information and the second device identification information is being managed and the other is not being managed and not to issue a notification to the external apparatus when the determination unit determines that neither one of the first device identification information and the second device identification information is being managed, the external apparatus being capable of receiving the notification through a predetermined communications line and managing a plurality of information processing apparatuses; and (4) an updating unit configured to update the corresponding information held by the holding unit in accordance with an update notification, for updating the combination of the first device identification information and the second device identification information, from the external apparatus. The notification issued by the communication controlling unit includes information indicating that either the first device identification information or the second device identification information is not being managed, and the communication controlling unit restricts

issuing the accounting information obtained from the predetermined device by the obtaining unit to the external apparatus if the determination unit determines either the first device identification information or the second device identification information is not being managed, and removes the restriction and issues the accounting information obtained by the obtaining unit to the external apparatus if the corresponding information is updated by the updating unit.

Among other notable features of Claim 1 are: (1) a communication controlling unit configured to issue a notification to an external apparatus when the determination unit determines that one of the first device identification information and the second device identification information is being managed and the other is not being managed and not to issue a notification to the external apparatus when the determination unit determines that neither one of the first device identification information and the second device identification information is being managed, the external apparatus being capable of receiving the notification through a predetermined communications line and managing a plurality of information processing apparatuses; and (2) an updating unit configured to update the corresponding information held by the holding unit in accordance with an update notification, for updating the combination of the first device identification information and the second device identification information, from the external apparatus, wherein the communication controlling unit restricts issuing the accounting information obtained from the predetermined device by the obtaining unit to the external apparatus if the determination unit determines either the first device identification information or the second device identification information is not being managed, and removes the restriction and issues the accounting information obtained by the obtaining unit to the external apparatus if the corresponding information is updated by the updating unit.

Schlonski relates to a system and method of retaining data about a plurality of assets, the assets (i.e., printers, computers, etc.) including network assets and non-network assets. A file is associated with each asset. The system includes a server and an asset manager which retains information about each asset. Schlonski discusses that when a network printer is detected from an Active Directory Partition (a directory service), the server checks its database to determine if the printer needs to be added. If the printer already exists within the database, the Active Directory Partition attribute is then updated for that printer's record in the database.

The Office Action cites paragraphs [0039], lines 1-11 and [0040], lines 1-4 as disclosing the updating unit of Claim 1. Applicant respectfully disagrees. Those passages merely discuss, among other things, automatically adding a network device to an asset manager database when a network server detects that the network device was newly added to a network, and that one asset manager can be used to manage the assets of multiple, mutually-independent companies or other entities. However, nothing has been found in Schlonski that would teach or suggest "an updating unit configured to update the corresponding information held by the holding unit in accordance with an update notification, for updating the combination of the first device identification information and the second device identification information, from the external apparatus," as recited in Claim 1.

The Office Action cites paragraph [0038] as disclosing a communication controlling unit that removes the restriction and issues the accounting information obtained by the obtaining unit to the external apparatus if the corresponding information is updated by the updated unit. Applicant respectfully disagrees. That passage merely discloses, among other things, that the network server can be controlled to perform polling operations to check the

operating status, such as malfunction or maintenance requirement of an asset, of individual devices. However, Applicant has found nothing in Schlonski that would teach or suggest “wherein said controlling step restricts issuing the accounting information obtained from the predetermined device in said obtaining step to the external apparatus if said determination step determines either the first device identification information or the second device identification information is not being managed, and removes the restriction and issues the accounting information obtained in said obtaining step to the external apparatus if the corresponding information is updated in said updating step,” as recited in Claim 1.

Applicant also has found nothing in Schlonski that would teach or suggest “a communication controlling unit configured to issue a notification to an external apparatus when said determination unit determines that one of the first device identification information and the second device identification information is being managed and the other is not being managed and not to issue a notification to the external apparatus when said determination unit determines that neither one of the first device identification information and the second device identification information is being managed, the external apparatus being capable of receiving the notification through a predetermined communications line and managing a plurality of information processing apparatuses,” as recited in Claim 1.

Yada does not remedy the deficiencies of Schlonski. Yada relates to an asset management system that analyzes a communication log to determine whether the MAC address and the IP address are those of an asset being managed or not. When the addresses are not those of an asset being managed, an alarm notification that the asset should be registered in the asset management register master is provided. However, Applicant has found nothing in Yada that

would teach or suggest “a communication controlling unit configured to issue a notification to an external apparatus when said determination unit determines that one of the first device identification information and the second device identification information is being managed and the other is not being managed and not to issue a notification to the external apparatus when said determination unit determines that neither one of the first device identification information and the second device identification information is being managed, the external apparatus being capable of receiving the notification through a predetermined communications line and managing a plurality of information processing apparatuses,” as recited in Claim 1.

Applicant also has found nothing in Yada that would teach or suggest “an updating unit configured to update the corresponding information held by the holding unit in accordance with an update notification, for updating the combination of the first device identification information and the second device identification information, from the external apparatus” or “wherein said controlling step restricts issuing the accounting information obtained from the predetermined device in said obtaining step to the external apparatus if said determination step determines either the first device identification information or the second device identification information is not being managed, and removes the restriction and issues the accounting information obtained in said obtaining step to the external apparatus if the corresponding information is updated in said updating step,” as recited in Claim 1.

Accordingly, Applicants submit that Claim 1 is patentable over Schlonsi and Yada, whether considered separately or in any permissible combination (if any).

A review of the other art of record has failed to reveal anything which, in Applicant’s opinion, would remedy the deficiencies of the art discussed above, as a reference

against Claim 1.

Independent Claims 11, 21 and 22 are method, computer program and recording medium claims, respectively, corresponding to apparatus Claim 1, and are believed to be patentable the cited prior art for at least the same reasons as discussed above in connection with Claim 1.

The other claims in this application are each dependent from one or another of the independent claims discussed above and are therefore believed patentable for the same reasons. Since each dependent claim is also deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, however, the individual reconsideration of the patentability of each on its own merits is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully request favorable reconsideration and early passage to issue of the present continued application.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our New York office by telephone at (212) 218-2100. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

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